

Why Partnerships and Advisory Groups?

Partnership Definition

Benefits

Section I: Introduction to Partnerships and Advisory Groups

Why Partnerships and Advisory Groups are Needed

Partnerships can change the culture of a community so that businesses and schools become mutually supportive in providing opportunities. Today and for the future, the resources of the entire community are required to provide a quality education for our youth.

The problems surrounding workplace preparedness and the demands of the workplace of the future are too broad and complex for any one agency or institution to address. Educators, Chambers of Commerce, and parents cannot do it alone. Communities have the opportunity to collaborate through partnerships.

Each partnership experience is unique, but there are some common elements in many of the working partnerships that contribute to their success. The material presented in this guide is intended to give direction. Basic guidelines and suggestions are offered on establishing a partnership, building membership, establishing structure, conducting effective meetings, and promoting the partnership.

Definition of a Partnership

A partnership consists of individuals who play on the same side with each other in a game or share the challenges and successes. Community partnerships focus on its youth, community members, and educators while sharing the risks and benefits of investing in people's lives.

Partnerships are not new to the education arena. Since the early 1980s business and industry have served on advisory committees for vocational programs. Advisory groups are partnerships with a specialized focus. Both advisory groups and partnerships share common management strategies.

Benefits of Partnerships and Advisory Groups

The greatest benefits achieved through partnerships are those gained by students through relevant education and opportunities for careers. The following are some other benefits of partnerships.

Provides the community a(n):

- Role in redesigning the focus of the schools.
- Public platform for identifying and reinforcing the educational and workplace competencies needed by students leaving the education system.
- Better prepared workforce with the skills to enable business to compete in the global marketplace.

Partnerships and Advisory Groups

- Opportunity to determine how tax dollars are used in preparing youth for life.

Provides the employer with:

- Higher-skilled entry-level employees.
- Effective tool for evaluating the qualifications of prospective employees.
- Enhanced pride and self-esteem of current employees resulting from their work with students.
- Improved skills of current employees through their training of students and as worksite mentors for teachers and counselors.
- Expanded relationships to help students, the community, and business/industry.
- A positive company image.

Provides businesses with:

- Improved community relations through services to education.
- Improved education and child development.
- Improved public awareness of its services and products.
- Assistance in improving, surviving, and innovating.
- Access to a pool of trained potential employees.
- An opportunity to inform teachers of recent innovations in business.
- Improve employee skills and morale by involvement in student services.

Provides the school with:

- Advice that is not easily obtainable elsewhere.
- An important public relations medium.
- Different points of view.
- Help in the placement of graduates.
- Assistance in keeping educational programs up to date.
- Assistance in professional development.

Benefits from early business/industry involvement:

- Increases the partnership's credibility and influence.
- Attracts other employers.
- Helps to clarify the roles of other partners.
- Validates the employer's commitment and leads to greater, more substantial support from the employer.
- Builds employer ownership in the initiative.
- Educates the employer, who can then become another recruiter-advocate.

Partnership Types

Types of Partnerships

Several types of partnerships require various levels of commitment and resources. Every type of partnership is important and provides input that the educational institution by itself would find difficult if not impossible to address. By creating a system that opens communication and understanding between business and education, everyone has a greater potential to gain. All types of partnerships, including advisory groups, share common management strategies.

Types of Partnerships for Community Involvement

Partners in Policy Legislative

Policy partnerships are collaborative efforts at the national, state, or local level, among businesses, schools, and public officials that shape public and political debate, bring about changes in state or federal legislation or local school governance and affect the overall direction of the educational system. Examples are: national or state task forces, private industry councils, and school boards.

Partners in Systemic Educational Improvement

Systemic educational improvement partnerships are those initiatives which business leaders, education officials, and other community leaders identify the need for reform or improvement in the educational system, and then work to make those major changes happen in the system. These partnerships generally affect a large number of youth, combine and channel resources in a different way, and bring about lasting institutional change. Examples are: community compacts, and consortia.

Partners in Management

Management assistance partnerships provide school officials with management support and business expertise in a range of areas. State and local school-to-work initiatives need business/industry partnerships to achieve this level. Examples are: management support and expertise in strategic planning, and goal setting.

Partners in Professional Development

Businesses involved in professional development provide opportunities for school personnel to update, upgrade or maintain their skills, or learn more about the labor market, industries and businesses in the community, workplace needs and career opportunities. Examples are: conferences, workshops, and inservice training activities.

Vocational Instructional Program Advisory Committees

Vocational instructional program advisory committees' principle purpose is to improve the quality and impact of instruction in programs that prepare workers for the targeted occupations. They promote constructive and necessary change within a specific program, generating and transmitting any ideas to the program from the employment community and vice versa. These councils are goal oriented and provide advice in areas such as occupational performance competencies, instructional objectives, equipment selection,

facility layout and modification, job requirements, credentials, program articulation, labor market needs as well as trends, career opportunities, instructor competencies and retraining strategies, and student recruitment and orientation. Examples are: Business Education Advisory Committee, and Health Occupations Advisory Committee.

Partners in the Classroom

Classroom partners are business volunteers who improve the learning environment by bringing their business or occupational expertise directly into the classroom for students and teachers or bringing the classroom to the business. Activities are planned and coordinated with the school staff, generally are tied to the school year or semester, and can focus on the needs of the school or of the individual students. Examples are: mentoring, tutoring, and extracurricular activities.

Partners in Special Events

Special events partnerships provide short-term project- or student-specific activities or resources to help with a specific need or problem. These partnerships are generally shorter term, are confined to one school, one teacher, or one class. Examples are: scholarships, fundraising, donating or sharing equipment or educational material, sponsoring career fairs, sponsoring student teams.

Today, many employers are prepared to make a substantial contribution to education, but they want to be equal partners and play a significant role. Effective partnerships are employer-directed.

...many employers are prepared to make a substantial contribution to education, but they want to be equal partners and play a significant role.